

Suspected herdsmen kill 20, torch 50 settlements in Benue

From Joseph Wantu (Makurdi)

NO fewer than 20 Tiv farmers were feared killed by suspected Fulani marauders in Iorja village, Gaambe-Toev, Logo Local Council of Benue State yesterday.

The attackers also set ablaze 50 settlements and destroyed property worth millions of naira.

The Guardian learnt that as a consequence of this, about 15 thousand internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the affected communities are now taking refuge at Mchia, Abeda-shitile, Anyiin and Tse Abi.

Narrating the ordeal to journalists on phone, a community leader, who fled the clash area to Anyiin town for safety, Chief Yankyaa Ugoh told *The Guardian* that herdsmen armed with sophisticated weapons stormed the settlement as earlier as 6 am and surrounded every house before opening fire on the villages.

"They set house ablaze, shot and killed Tiv farmers who attempted to escape and because we were taken unawares, they killed as many people as possible but right now we have been able to recover only 20 corpses," Ugoh stated.

Other settlements seriously reduced to ashes, *The Guardian* gathered include, Tse bee, Gafa village, Ukura and Iorja among others.

Another witness in the area who confided in *The Guardian* but pleaded anonymity said the displaced persons taking refuge at Mchia, Anyiin and Abeda were made up of women, children and the elderly are sleeping on bare floor in primary schools in the area.